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A
S E R M O N

Preached at

St. CHAD's CHURCH,

I N

S H R E W S B U R Y,

November 10, 1742.

BEING THE

Day appointed for a general F A S T, on
Occasion of the War with *Spain*.

By WILLIAM ADAMS, A. M. *afterwards Mayor*
Vicar of St. Chad's, Salop, and late Fellow of
Pembroke College, Oxford.

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M.DCC.XLIII.

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PSALM, CXXii. 6, 7.

*Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they
shall prosper that love thee; Peace be
within thy Walls, and Prosperity within
thy Palaces.*

THE Words are an affectionate exhortation of King *David* to his Subjects and Countrymen to shew their zeal for their Mother City, *Jerusalem*, by offering up their prayers to God for her welfare and prosperity. In the performance of this duty He not only leads them by his example, but hath in the words of the Text put a Song of blessing and prayer in their mouths; and expresses his own good wishes to his country in a strain of so much life and beauty, as must almost naturally raise the like publick concern and affection in others.

We are at present met, as Fellow Citizens and Countrymen, to pay the same duties to our Mother Country, our *Jerusalem*; and have the like royal example and admonition to encourage us in it..

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I cannot therefore tell where better to direct your thoughts upon this occasion, than to the words of the Text ; from whence I shall endeavour,

First, to recommend to you that Publick Affection or Love to our Country, which is so agreeably expressed in them ; and

Secondly, to shew particularly what are the present Duties, to which this Love of our Country calls us, and which the Piety and Wisdom of our Governors have appointed this Solemnity to remind us of.

The Love of our Country is a Principle, which hath been more celebrated in all ages, hath been the subject of more praise, and panegyrick, than any other affection in the whole train of Virtue. It hath been the constant Theme of Poets, Orators and Historians. Statues and Coins have been erected and struck, and all the treasures of Art and Wit perpetually exhausted, in doing honour to those, who have excelled in this Character. And indeed the Name of Patriot implies in it's true Sense every thing, that is most great and godlike among men : It carries in it the Idea of a publick blessing ; it implies a power of doing good, exerted and extended to whole communities ; and resembles with-
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in its Sphere, that universal Providence, which protects and supports the world. But if we enquire more closely into the actions of those, who have been most flattered under this title, we shall find, that nothing hath been more frequently mistaken, than the nature of this virtue; that most of the Appearances of it have been nothing else but Ambition, a Love of Dominion and Tyranny; and that many of those, who have been most honoured as Benefactors to their Country, have only contributed to it's greatness or power by invading the rights of their neighbouring nations; carrying war and desolation into distant countries, and enslaving and oppressing as many, as they could conquer. Among the Romans, where this Passion prevailed most, and was held in the highest honour, it was a national Principle to conquer and subdue as many countries, as they could. But if we now compare these Principles with that Charity, which Christianity hath set up as the measure and standard of Virtue, or indeed with the common principles of Justice and Humanity, we shall find, that nothing can be more contrary to the nature of true Virtue; that no Love of our Country can justify oppression and cruelty; and that, where this passion leads Men to the ruin of whole cities and countries without any just cause, instead of entitling them to honour, as benefactors to their country, it ought to render them

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them the objects of publick horror and aversion, as the common enemies of mankind.

It will therefore perhaps be worth our while to consider more distinctly the nature of this Virtue, and to enquire in what the merit of it consists, and what are the Duties implied in it.

By our Country, when we consider it as the object of our affection, is certainly meant that Body of Men, who are united with us in one Community, under the same Laws and Government, and in a league of mutual Defence and Support. And, as the End of this Union in all Government is the common Interest and Good of the whole, a Love of our Country implies in it, First, A steady Regard to this common or publick Interest. And secondarily, to those laws of Union, that Form of Polity or Constitution, which are fixed upon as the best means for promoting this End. This Publick Affection is in some Degree natural to the mind of Man: And to see what there is of Virtue in it, we must consider the several Principles upon which it is commonly built.

And First, That social Principle, which God hath implanted in us, and which makes us delight in a mutual intercourse with each other, naturally leads us to love those, with whom we converse. A similitude

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militude of life and manners, an agreement in customs, opinions and language, and (which is the case in some particulars of all those, who are united in Society) an agreement in the same common interest; all these are a natural foundation for love and affection. They work mechanically on the mind; and consequently, as far as these are concerned in raising our publick affections, there is no virtue or merit in them: they are the fruits of self-love, and are common to the worst of Men, as well as the best.

Secondly, another natural foundation for this Love of our Country are the several alliances of Friendship and Natural Relation, by which the Members of the same community are always united together. The natural affections, which bind together those of the same Kindred and Family,

- - - - - *The Charities*
Of Father, Husband, Brother,-----

as our excellent *Milton* calls them; all conspire to promote and strengthen this publick Principle in us; like so many streams, that encrease and swell the channel, which receives them. This is mentioned by our Royal Author himself, as a Motive of endearment to his Country, in the verse which follows the Text: *For my Brethren and Companions*
Sake

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Sake I will wish thee Prosperity. Here this Affection begins to appear amiable ; it is founded upon a virtuous Principle, and will be found to rise highest upon these motives in the best and most ingenuous Tempers. Yet these are passions natural to the mind of Man ; self-love hath a great share in them ; and consequently to be so far influenced with a Love of our Country argues but a low degree of Virtue. It is certain too, that these may sometimes give the Mind a quite contrary direction, and strongly incline us to the prejudice of our Country. There are many instances, in which the interest of our dearest friend or relation ought to be sacrificed to the Publick Good. We must therefore look for some farther and steadier Principle to build this duty upon.

A third Principle then, upon which the Love of our Country may be rationally founded, is the Protection, which it gives us in our just Rights and Liberties. This indeed, as far as our own interest is concerned in it, is a private or selfish principle, and hath nothing of that publick Spirit, which we are enquiring after. But if we consider it not as a narrow concern for our own interests, but for the natural Rights in common of all our Fellow Citizens and Countrymen ; if we are ready to defend their lives and properties at the hazard of our own ; if we are ready to oppose ourselves the
foremost

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foremost against the Invasions of foreign, or the usurpations of domestick tyranny; this is plainly Virtue of the highest and most disinterested kind. A Love of our Country is in these instances a Love of Justice, a Love of Charity, a Desire to contribute to the welfare and happiness of all about us, and to protect them from wrong and oppression.

Here then is the foundation of that Virtue, which is so deservedly applauded in this character. It consists in a generous Regard to the common happiness and welfare of mankind, exemplified particularly in the society or community, in which we live; which is certainly the noblest cause, in which the heart of man can be engaged, and in which he, who deserves the Name of Patriot, must think his fortune and life well lost.

A Love of our Country then, where this passion hath such an object, as it can perfectly acquiesce in, implies in it a Love of the Laws and Constitution, by which it is governed: And that Government has the best right to our affection and service, in which the Common Rights of Mankind are best secured, and protected to us. Here then let us apply this observation to our own use and instruction.

There never was perhaps a Country or Government in the world, where the natural liberties and
C enjoyments

enjoyments of mankind were more effectually secured to all the members of it than that, under which we live. It is our happiness not to be governed by the arbitrary will of an absolute Monarch, but by Laws of our own making; to have the administration of these Laws in the hands of a Prince, who owns himself their Subject, and who never has in any one instance assumed a power of altering, repealing or suspending the force of them; which, as it is a happiness unknown to most other Countries, so, however it was claimed as the right of *Englishmen*, was yet never experienced in fact among them, till that happy Revolution, which freed us at once from the apprehensions of Popery, and its inseparable attendant, Arbitrary Power.

And this leads me to mention another blessing of the highest value to our Country, and that is the free profession of the purest Religion in the world: the interest of which is inseparably connected with that Constitution and Government, by which it is protected and established. They have both the same common Enemies, and must stand or fall together. This therefore is another consideration, which ought greatly to endear our Country to us; and which the Royal Psalmist likewise mentions, as a ground of his pious affection to Jerusalem: *Yea, because of the House of the Lord our God I will seek thy Good.* Upon the whole, we have in the
security

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security of our civil and religious rights every publick advantage in the highest perfection, that any Nation can boast of; and consequently, if the Love of our Country be in any circumstances a duty, it is in an extraordinary manner binding upon us; and it is with great Reason, that this generous Principle has hitherto so eminently prevailed, and will, I hope, always prevail amongst us.

What are the proper expressions of this affection, or the duties implied in this character, may be easily collected from what has been said. They are in our several stations to promote the common interest of our Country; to be obedient to the Government we are under; and to serve diligently the offices, assigned us in it. It must be left to those, who are distinguished by a publick character, and who are blessed with talents and abilities, equal to the charges they sustain, to shine as Patriots to their Country; to protect it by their councils, and defend it by their courage. But it is the duty of every common subject to submit peaceably to the Laws of that Government he is under, and that not only for wrath, or a fear of punishment, but for conscience sake: It is his duty to strengthen the hands of the Government; to remove every impediment out of its Way; and not to weaken it by spreading faction and discontent among the People; and, lastly, to contribute chearfully his proportion of those supplies,

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plies, which the exigencies of the state may make it necessary to demand.

The particular Duties, to which the Love of our Country at present calls us, and which I was in the last place to consider, are those of humbling ourselves under a sense of those Sins, which may have provoked God to withdraw his Mercy from us; and imploring the assistance and blessing of Heaven on his Majesty's Arms; which have been taken up, not upon a vain Principle of Ambition, to gratify the resentment of an angry, or the pride of an aspiring Monarch; but in defence of the plainest rights, and such as all mankind have ever claimed, at the call of a provoked and long-injured People; and after every other method of redress had been tried in vain. But though from the Goodness of our Cause, as well as the wisdom of our Councils, and the strength of our Fleets and Armies, we have the most reasonable Hope of success; yet is it a truth, which reason and experience, as well as religion, teach us, that *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong**: That the Event of all things is in the hands of God; and more especially, that the fate of nations is weighed and determined by him. If therefore in the common occurrences of life it is our wisdom and interest, as well as our piety, to look up to Heaven

* Ecclesiastes, ix. 11.

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for a blessing on our labours and endeavours; it is certainly a far more indispensable Duty in us on occasions of so great Importance. A presumptuous confidence in our own strength might itself justly provoke God to give us up into the hands of our enemies; and on the other hand, a pious trust in his mercy may be a powerful means to draw down his blessing and assistance in our favour. Thus *the children of Israel were brought down*, says the Scripture, *in that day**, and *the children of Judah prevailed, because They relied on the Lord their God*. Let us then not build too much upon human prospects; or shut God out of our Councils and Designs; but let us flee humbly to him for succour in a pious acknowledgment, that without him *Nothing is strong*; that without him *§ No King can be saved by the multitude of an Host; nor the mightiest man be delivered by his strength†*. A neighbouring Prince

* 2 Chron. xiii. 8. § Psalm xxxiii. 16.

† For the readers Information, I have here translated the French King's Injunctions upon this Head; which are contained in a Letter to the Archbishop of Paris, bearing Date, August 1738.

— “ Among all the Establishments, formed by the piety of
“ my Ancestors, there is none more to be regarded than the so-
“ lemn vow of Lewis XIII. of glorious memory. This Prince,
“ filled with the truest sentiments of piety, had so often expe-
“ rienced the visible succours of Heaven, both when his King-
“ dom was disturbed by the troubles, which Heresy always
“ brings along with it, and in the wars, which the jealousy of
“ his neighbours stirred up; that he thought he could not give
“ amore

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Prince hath lately chosen with great solemnity the *Virgin Mary* for the Patroness and Guardian of his Dominions; and published his Royal Will in a very extraordinary form, that all his subjects should address

“ a more authentick testimony of his devout acknowledgment,
 “ and his Veneration for the most holy Virgin, than by putting
 “ his Kingdom under her protection.

“ *Lewis* the XIVth of glorious memory, my most honoured
 “ Lord and Great Grandfather, acted upon the same principles;
 “ and received, during the whole Course of his Reign, signal
 “ effects of this protection. And as I cannot follow greater ex-
 “ amples than these of my two august predecessors, I will, that
 “ this year, which compleats one hundred years since my King-
 “ dom has acknowledged the Mother of God for its special pa-
 “ troness, shall give Date to this my renewal of the same Esta-
 “ blishment. To this End, I write to acquaint you, that my
 “ Intention is, that on the morning of the Sunday preceding, the
 “ 15th of *August*, the day of the assumption of the most holy
 “ Virgin, you cause to be published the declamation of *Lewis*
 “ XIII. of the 10th of *February*, 1638, in the metropolitan
 “ church of my good City of *Paris*, and others of your Diocese;
 “ and that after vespers on the Day of Assumption, there shall
 “ be a procession with all possible Splendour, attended with the
 “ usual Ceremonies observed in general processions of the most
 “ solemn form. And the like is to be done in all Churches, as
 “ well parochial as monasteries, in the cities, towns, and villa-
 “ ges of my Kingdom, &c.

Signed

LEWIS.

In pursuance of these Injunctions, the Archbishop of *Paris* issued out his mandate, *August* 8, 1738,—signifying,—That the King had in imitation of *Lewis* XIII. taken the most holy Virgin for the special Patroness of his Kingdom; and had consecrated, in a particular manner, to her his person, estates, his crown and subjects. And requiring,—That every year, at the feast of assumption, there shall be a procession of the most solemn kind to implore the assistance of this QUEEN OF HEAVEN, and to perpetuate the memory of this religious consecration. *Mer-cure Historique*, 1738.

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address their vows and prayers to her under this Character. Our enemies of the same religion have likewise probably their Tutelar Saint to apply to on this occasion. Let us leave them to their protection; and let us chuse on our part the Lord for our God. *In his name will we set up our Banners,** who alone giveth victory unto Kings, and saveth from the Peril of the Sword.

But farther a second Duty, to which the piety and wisdom of our superiors hath at present called us, is that of humbling ourselves in the sight of God under a Sense of our Sins, lest they should provoke him to withdraw his mercy from us.

It was given in especial charge to the people of *Israel*, and made a part of their Law, that, when the Host went forth against the Enemy, then they should keep themselves from every wicked thing §. If they expected God should declare for them in the day of war, they were to sanctify themselves to the Lord, and to put away all evil from among them. And a like religious rule was very generally observed among the Heathen; they had certain purifyings and lustrations always performed by their whole Armies, before they led them to Battle. It was thought necessary before the determination of

* Psalm xx. 5. § Deut. xxiii. 9.

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so great events, on which the fate of nations is usually suspended, to avert the displeasure, and deprecate the anger of Heaven, by a more than ordinary solemnity of religious worship. For the same pious reasons we are called upon in the Duty of this day together with our devotions to enter upon a reformation of life and manners, in order to procure the favour of Heaven to our Cause. In vain we offer up our prayers to God, if we continue in a state of disobedience to his Laws. If we expect the blessing of Heaven to attend us, we must endeavour to procure it. If we would make God our friend, we must forsake those Sins, which set us at enmity with him.

A life of holiness and virtue is at all times necessary to recommend our prayers to God; but nothing less than a national virtue is sufficient to secure those general and extensive blessings of his providence, which he hath promised to a righteous nation. The Scriptures are very full in declaring, and the history of the *Jewish* nation is a continual witness of it, that the dispensations of God towards publick bodies and communities of men are always adjusted and determined by the good, or evil, that prevails among them. *At what instant he speaks concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation, against whom he hath pronounced,*
turn

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turn from their evil way, he will repent of the evil, that he thought to do unto them. And at what instant he speaks concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build, and to plant it; if it do evil in his sight, and obey not his voice, then he will repent of the good, wherewith he said he would benefit them. He createth peace, and maketh war. § He turneth a fruitful land into Barrenness for the wickedness of them, that dwell therein; and on the other hand, in favour of an obedient people, He maketh the wilderness a standing water, and water springs of a dry ground. ||

Let us then take this occasion to reflect on the present state of Virtue and Religion among us. It is, I am afraid, such, as can give us no just confidence in the favour of God. The purity of our faith and worship does indeed very much excell that of our Enemies; but we cannot suppose the worst of our Enemies to live worse than a great part of us do. The Principles of Religion were perhaps never more rationally explained, or more justly directed to their true End and Aim, the promoting of piety and virtue in the world, than they generally are among us: That venerable Simplicity, which recommended Christianity at its first appearance, seems almost revived in the doctrines

§ Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 9.
|| Psalm cvii. 34. 35.

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trines and rituals of our church. But can it be said, that religion hath gained in the same proportion in the esteem and reverence of those, who are taught it in this purity? On the contrary, Is it not true, that, as we have rectified our faith and opinions, we have sunk in our piety and morals? Is not the worship of God here most neglected, where it is most free from error and superstition? Is not indeed a want of religion and principle the distinguishing character of the times and country we live in? Are not the forms of piety and restraints of temperance openly scorned and derided by many among us? And are not those Sins, which are forbid to be once named among christians, committed without shame or fear, and even with boasting and triumph? Certainly if this is our case, we ought seriously to attend to the great danger we are in; to consider how we may avert the judgments of God, which threaten us; and recall that Spirit of piety and virtue, which alone can save us.

Great indeed and difficult is the undertaking to reform a corrupt Age, but we should therefore apply ourselves to the work with a diligence, suitable to the importance and necessity of it: Let those, who are in Authority, shew their zeal in executing the Laws for that purpose; in suppressing the publick and known temptations to

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to lewdness and debauchery; and in punishing that prophaneness, which triumphs openly in our Streets. Let those, whose rank and character give weight to their example, shew their sense of religion by a constant attendance upon the offices of it, and by a strict Sobriety of life and manners; that so others may be won by their conversation to think on the evil of their ways. Let us every one contribute his endeavour to reduce and lessen the weight of publick guilt by at least reforming and amending himself, and unite in our prayers, and in every good work, that *God may be intreated for the Land.** So may we yet piously hope, that God will go forth with our Armies,§ and command deliverances for Jacob;† that through him we shall push down our enemies, and keep them under, that rise up against us.|| So shall we not only consult the peace and prosperity of this our *Jerusalem*, but shall provide in the best manner for our future peace and happiness in a better Country, shall be received as true Sons and Citizens of that *Jerusalem*, which is above, the Mother of us all.*

Let this then be thought to deserve our whole attention, in which both our present and everlasting

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 25.
xiv. 4.

§ Psalm xliv. 9.
|| Psalm cviii. 13.

† Psalm
* Gall. iv. 26.

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ing Interest are concerned. Let it be our great endeavour to procure the favour of God to ourselves, and, as far as our prayers and personal obedience can prevail, to our country. And may we all so live, united by the bonds of piety and charity here, as to be admitted hereafter into *the holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem*, there to live for ever in the happy rank and character of Fellow Citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

* Eph. 2. 19.

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